

# Norway: All-Risk, Incident Command System, Program Evaluation Exchange 2004

Submitted by (Chief of Party) Larry Sutton

Other BLM Travelers: Bob Knutson, Nevada State Office

Dates and Location(s) of Travel: May 17 thru 29. Oslo, Drammen, Gol, Skien, Porsgrunn, Stavanger, Tonsberg.



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Purpose/Objectives of Trip: Interface with Norwegian emergency service providers to study computer-based training currently being used in the Norwegian fire service. Exchange lessons learned on implementation of the Incident Command System and use of Incident Management Teams. Study use of GPS and GIS technology in the Norwegian emergency services.

Brief Description of Itinerary/Activities: See attached. Visited Drammen, Gol, Skien, Stavanger and Oslo fire departments; discussed fire apparatus, dispatch procedures, integration with other emergency responders. Visited the ambulance service in Porsgrunn and received a demonstration of their use of GPS. Visited the Norsk-Hydro plant in Porsgrunn to view a Virtual Reality training

system in use there in an industrial setting. Visited the Maritime University in Tonsberg to look at computer training simulators being used to teach navigational skills to trainee captains of large ships. Visited the Syningen and Torpomoen training centers near the town of Gol to look at training facilities and equipment. Visited the Norwegian Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) in Stavanger to observe a state-of-the-art integrated emergency response center that reacts to maritime emergencies worldwide. Met with the Director-General of DSB (Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning) and staff to discuss the Incident Command System and Incident Management Teams and issues relating to implementation in Norway. A directorate-level delegation visit to the U.S. was also discussed. Made presentations on NIFC, the BLM and interagency fire organization, ICS and IMTs to various audiences including a training session in Skien, the Norwegian Association of Fire Officers and Norwegian Fire Protection Association in Oslo and DSB staff in Tonsberg.

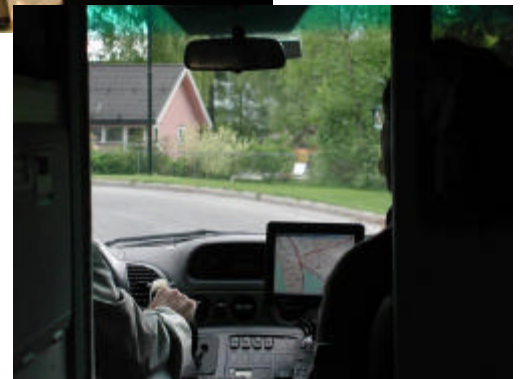
## Findings/Observations/Conclusions:

1. Norwegian implementation of ICS and use of Incident Management Teams are efforts that are just beginning. This represents a unique opportunity for fire managers from the U.S. – where both ICS and IMTs have been in use for decades – to observe these startup efforts and profit from new solutions and lessons learned. Although our system could be termed “mature”, it needs to continue to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances and this is an excellent opportunity to learn in almost a “laboratory” situation.
2. The Norwegian fire service has high standards across the board. Equipment was of high quality and was well maintained, even in smaller fire stations. Facilities were also of very high quality and in most cases it appears that the users were directly involved in facility design. The larger fire stations

have their own training facilities which are also well-equipped and thoughtfully designed. The Torpomoen training facility in Buskerud County represents a very high standard for a facility of this type anywhere in the world.



3. Integration of technology into everyday operations was a standard. GIS and GPS tools were common and well-integrated into the dispatch system. It seems to be commonly understood that technological tools should be used as often and as effectively as possible. This is in contrast to some locations in the U.S. fire service where resistance to new technology is evident. While willing to try new technology, Norwegians also seem to identify what is required for the mission and are unwilling to accept off the shelf products unless they meet their needs.



4. Staffing of dispatch/coordination centers was consistently achieved using experienced fire personnel. Dispatch positions are not viewed entry-level; experience in the fire service is a prerequisite for dispatch positions. Consolidation has been occurring involving Dispatch Centers to gain efficiencies. More Centers now cross jurisdictional boundaries and Dispatch across State lines where practical. While they have combined some centers based on workload and closest forces all Centers remain "Stand Alone Fire". Most feel it is best to have separate centers dispatch fire, medical and law enforcement.



5. Technology is commonly used in training. Computer-based trainers, 3-D simulations and Virtual Reality simulations were all in use. The 3-D simulation developed by the Oslo Fire Department in conjunction with a contractor is better than anything we now have in the U.S. and it was obtained for a very low cost.



## **Recommendations, Follow-up Actions:**

1. The Norway – U.S. exchange program should be continued for at least two more years. People involved in the exchange should continue to be subject-matter-experts in the subject areas that are to be studied. Areas of interest to the BLM fire organization that warrant further study include:
  - a. Fire prevention and education
  - b. Dispatch/coordination
  - c. Monitoring ICS implementation in Norway
  - d. Development and use of Incident Management Teams in Norway
  - e. Equipment development
  - f. Aviation
2. The number of BLM personnel involved in the annual exchange should be two instead of one. Obviously, two people can observe more in the same amount of time than a single person. Additionally, there is value in being able to compare notes during the trip with a colleague from home.
3. The director of the DSB indicated an interest in visiting the U.S. for the purpose of observing firsthand how the U.S. wildland fire service operates at the executive level. He would no doubt be interested in National MAC processes, NICC, use of the military and our interface with other non-fire agencies. This interest should be pursued: the Director leads the agency in Norway with organizational responsibility for research and national preparedness as well as fire, rescue and civil defense.
4. Some work should be done to facilitate requests for assistance from the Norwegian government that may be forthcoming. These requests would be outside of the formal exchange and would likely relate to initiatives that the Norwegians are pursuing. A good example of this would be assistance in developing an ICS curriculum for use in Norway. Further discussion on this topic is needed with high-level contacts in DSB; this would be possible during an executive-level visit to the U.S. by their Director.
5. Follow up with the Oslo Fire Department on their 3-D fire simulation software and explore possibilities for its use in the U.S.

## **Lessons Learned for Future Assignments of this Type:**

It would be good if a briefing could be arranged for U.S. exchange participants before they travel to Norway; this briefing would be provided by previous exchange participants. Topics covered could be items to take, travel, language and cultural considerations, professional and cultural areas of interest, and scheduling.

A single comprehensive briefing upon arrival in Norway (after recovery from jet lag) would be a good thing. This briefing should cover the organizational structure and responsibilities of emergency service providers in Norway. Enough detail should be provided to enable an understanding of the Norwegian fire service and other emergency response entities at the Kommune, County and National levels. This would alleviate the need for this information to be repeated at each location visited. Also, if possible, travelers should arrive in the evening so that they can go to sleep right away.

Guttorm Liebe, the Fire Chief for Skien Kommune, and Even Skredsvig, Senior Engineer at DSB, are two key contacts within the Norwegian fire service. Guttorm is the Chairman of the Norwegian Fire Chief's Association. He is very well-connected throughout the Norwegian fire service and is a competent and thorough professional. He is an excellent host and was responsible for most of the logistical arrangements during our visit. These arrangements were nearly flawless and were designed to achieve the maximum benefit for us. The DSB provides the funding for the Norwegian side of the exchange, and Even Skredsvig is a key individual in that organization. Even has the institutional memory of the program, since he was one of the initiators of it (along with Les Rosenkrance, former



Director of Fire and Aviation for BLM). Even was also a wonderful host. Both of these individuals have an excellent vision of what this exchange program can do both for the U.S. and for Norway. They should continue to be intimately involved in the program in all its facets.

Whenever possible, efforts should be made to involve both past and future participants in the exchange during the actual visits. For example, when we visited Gol the Norwegian 2004 exchange student, Dag Botnen, was our host. Dag was a great host who showed us many aspects of his country and fire service. Of course we hope to return that favor when Dag visits the U.S. in August. The involvement of past and future exchange students in the program is a beneficial practice that should be planned for and continued as long as the program exists.

It is beneficial for exchange students to read through the reports from the previous exchanges. The reports from both U.S. and Norwegian participants are very informative regarding what to expect, what has been accomplished already and what could be done in the future. These reports should be made available to participants at least a month before departure so that they can be read and digested prior to travel.

Appendices (if applicable):

- Contact List - Persons, Agencies/Offices
- More Complete Itinerary/Chronology of Events

